

Speaking to the soul



Life-giving water

Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I

give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”
John 4:13-14

Here, Jesus was talking to a Samaritan woman. Everything about their meeting was surprising. First of all, it would have astonished everyone that he had travelled through Samaria. The rivalry between the Samaritans and the Jews was intense for deep historical reasons. After the breakup of the kingdom, following the death of Solomon, the northern territory was annexed by the Assyrians, who resettled the area with foreigners. As far as the Judaeans in the south were concerned, Samaria had lost its racial and religious purity. The divide was made even deeper when the Samaritans built their own temple at Mount Gerizim around 400 BC. Samaritans and Jews hated one another, so Jews would almost always have made a careful detour around Samaria, but not Jesus.

The other astonishing fact is that Jesus was willing to talk to a woman. The rabbis gave very clear guidance on this subject. “One should not talk with a woman on the street, not even with his own wife, and certainly not with somebody else’s wife, because of the gossip of men.” That didn’t stop Jesus.

I love how Jesus gladly offered his gift of life to every kind of person. In the previous chapter, he met Nicodemus, who was as different from this woman as could be imagined. He was educated, religious, and utterly respectable, and she was probably illiterate and a social outcast, which would have been why she was collecting water in the hottest part of the day. Jesus came to both of them and made his

generous offer of new life, and that's what he still does. He comes to the wealthy and well-connected and to the homeless and the refugees. He offers the gift of eternal life to all who will receive it.

QUESTION

What was the water that Jesus came to bring?

PRAYER

Loving Father, thank you for the life-giving water that you offer to me, and all those whom I will meet today. Amen

*Photograph - Flowers. In St Colman's Parish Church,
Dunmurry*

